

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONROV 02405 011643Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 A-01 OPR-02 CPR-01
NSCE-00 USIE-00 PA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
INRE-00 SP-02 MCT-01 CU-04 USSS-00 SY-05 CCO-00
OC-06 PM-05 DODE-00 /064 W
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O 011433Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8804

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 2405

FOR PRESIDENTIAL PARTY

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT: REACTION REPORT

1. THE ONLY NEGATIVE COMMENTS NOTED TO DATE REGARDING THE COMING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO MONROVIA WERE MADE MARCH 31 BY CONMANY WESSEH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA STUDENT UNION, IN A SPEECH AT A RECEPTION IN HONOR OF THE INAUGURATION OF DR. MARIE ANTOINETTE BROWN SHERMAN AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA. IN THE CONTEXT OF A YOUTHFULLY EXUBERANT ATTACK ON THE ESTABLISHMENT, WHICH HE ACCUSED OF RUNNING THE UNIVERSITY IN A WAY "TO SATISFY THE POLICAL DESIRES OF OUR LEADERS", THE STUDENT UNION PRESIDENT CALLED THE VISIT UNNECESSARY, EXPENSIVE AND USELESS.

2. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPEECH, FOREIGN MINISTER C. CECIL DENNIS JR. APPROACHED THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR TO EXPRESS REGRET OVER THE REMARKS MADE CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT. DENNIS SAID THAT THE GOL DOES NOT OPPOSE FREE SPEECH BUT HE FEELS THESE REMARKS
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PAGE 02 MONROV 02405 011643Z

WERE NOT APPROPRIATE TO THE OCCASION. DENNIS COMMENTED THAT QUESTIONING BY YOUTH OF THE VALUE TO LIBERIA OF ITS CLOSE TIES WITH THE U.S. IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY COMMON; AND THAT IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT FOR BOTH THE U.S. AND THE GOL TO DO ALL POSSIBLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SUCH TIES ARE TRULY MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. (THE MINISTER HAS MADE THIS POINT FREQUENTLY, AS WE

HAVE REPORTED.)

3. COMMENT: WE NOW HAVE LEARNED SOME AMONG THE SMALL GROUP OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIBERIA MAY BE CONSIDERING MAKING SOME DEMONSTRATION DURING THE VISIT. ALTHOUGH THE GOL WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO DISCOURAGE FORM OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATION, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT PLACARDS MIGHT APPEAR (PERHAPS WHERE THE PRESIDENTIAL ROUTE PASSES THE UNIVERSITY GROUNDS) ATTACKING THE U.S. (FOR EXAMPLE) FOR NOT ADOPTING STRONGER POLICIES AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

4. IN ANY CASE, THIS MORE RADICAL STUDENT WING DOES NOT REPRESENT MAJORITY SENTIMENT AMONG STUDENTS WHO, AS ALWAYS, LOOK PRIMARILY TO THE U.S. AS THEIR PRIME CHOICE FOR POST-GRADUATE STUDIES.
CARTER

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NNN

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